

Západočeská univerzita v Plzni

**Fakulta pedagogická
Katedra anglického jazyka**

**Diplomová práce
JAZYKOVÝ TRANSFER MEZI ČESKÝM A
ANGLICKÝM JAZYKEM (MATEŘSKÝ A CIZÍ
JAZYK)**

Jitka Tomášková

Plzeň 2014

University of West Bohemia

**Faculty of Education
Department of English**

Thesis
**LANGUGAGE TRANSFER BETWEEN CZECH AND
ENGLISH (L1 AND L2)**

Jitka Tomášková

Plzeň 2014

Tato stránka bude ve svázané práci Váš původní formulář *Zadání dipl. práce*
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V Plzni dne 15.dubna 2014

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Jitka Tomášková

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank to my supervisor Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D. for her useful help, suggestions, time, and a lot of patience during the whole process of my thesis.

ABSTRACT

Tomášková, Jitka. The University of West Bohemia. April, 2014. Language transfer between Czech and English (L1 and L2). Supervisor: Mgr. Gabriela Klečková, Ph.D.

This thesis deals with the phenomenon of language transfer between a native language (Czech in the case of this thesis) and a second language (English). In the Theoretical Background Chapter, information about the types of language transfer is provided, further it introduces the typology of both languages and factors influencing occurrence of language transfer. Then it focuses on language transfer from the linguistic point of view. The research part investigates the occurrence of language transfer among adult students of a language school. The research is realized by the means of a questionnaire. Later on, the results of the research are presented by the means of figures and summaries of responses. Finally, the implications of language transfer for teaching are discussed.

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that if you study a foreign language, you take some features of your native language with you. These features are often used in the second language, no matter if they are right or wrong. Learners take some habits from their mother tongue (L1) into the learning of the second language (L2) and it influences the process of learning. This phenomenon is called language transfer or cross-linguistic influence. There are also some opinions that this phenomenon does not exist. This thesis will deal with its existence. Similarities between Czech as L1 and English as L2 could be considered not so evident; these two languages could seem to be completely different

Some of the features of language transfer might help with learning of a language; some might be the source of confusion. These kinds of language transfer are called positive and negative. This thesis especially deals with the occurrence of negative language transfer among the adult students of English of a language school in Plzen.

In the first chapter of the thesis (Theoretical Background) the essential information about language transfer are provided and several types of language transfer are described. Further, the language typology of English and Czech is introduced because both languages have different origin and historical development. Furthermore, common misunderstandings of Czech learners in English are added. Next, factors influencing language transfer are presented. The factors are especially connected with the personality of the learner. Next part of the thesis focuses on transfer in linguistics. Different areas of linguistics are briefly described regarding language transfer.

Research Methodology Chapter provides the introduction to the research itself. Fifty respondents answered the questions distributed through a questionnaire. Firstly, this chapter introduces the respondents of the research; it presents especially their demographics such as age, education, occupation, level of English. Next, the results of the research are presented. The students expressed their attitude towards learning English and their motivation. Further, the questions regarding to language skills and the practical knowledge of English follow. The results are presented by the means of figures and summaries of the answers. Commentaries on the results follow with the emphasis on the occurrence of language transfer in the responses. The responses are put into the context with the suggestions made in the theoretical chapter and also the individual responses are compared. Finally, the last chapter describes the implications of language transfer on

language teaching and it suggests what teachers should be aware of. Conclusion reviews the main ideas of the whole thesis.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The objective of this chapter is to define the phenomenon of language transfer between the first language (mother tongue) and the second language. It also focuses on the influence of the first language while learning and the second language acquisition. Within the first part there are also defined several types of language transfer. Next, the typology of both languages (English and Czech) is presented. It also provides the description of them and their relationship. Especially it focuses on the differences between the languages from the developmental and grammatical point of view. There are also explained the transitional stages of developing the language (so called Czenglish and interlanguage). Further, factors influencing second language learning and language transfer are observed. This part especially focuses on the factors connected with the personality of the learner. Language transfer in linguistics is also introduced and divided into several sections (syntax, phonetics, morphology, and lexicology) which deal with the problematic issues of the given area and offer the brief summary of each of these fields.

Language Transfer and Second Language Acquisition

It is necessary to define the meaning of the term language transfer but it is not really an easy task. Terence Odlin (1989) described this problematic definition. He excluded the consequence of habit formation or a simple interference or a falling back on the native language. He also claims that the transfer could not necessarily exist only between native language and the second language, it could appear even within acquiring any other language, and so the relation could emerge between two and more acquired languages.

Second Language Acquisition was described by Van Patten and G Benati (2010): “Second language acquisition (SLA) a research field that focuses on learners and learning rather than teachers and teaching” (p. 1). One of the SLA definitions says that it is “the study of how learners create a new language system.” It means that they study what is and what is not learned. SLA also describes how learners create their linguistic system within the second language, and to what extent are they able to use it in their comprehension and production of the language. Odlin (1989) also gives one definition, which is the most acceptable among the others and it is considered to be the most exact: “Transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any

other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired.” (Odlin, 1989, p.27)

On one hand, language transfer is one of the most important characteristics of second language acquisition. For many years it is a subject of many discussions and it is considered to be a controversial topic. These discussions started to be taken seriously in the 1940s and 1950s, even though the experts say that it could date back up to the 19th century, when appeared the problem of language classification and language change. And it is evident that the importance of language contact started to be taken into account.

Language transfer begins to appear with mixing and meeting of the languages. Language started meeting with the need of trade, they influenced each other, borrow the words and even the phrases or sentences from each other. These interchange might occur with two or more languages. Many people believe that the knowledge of the language which is related to the “new” language might be helpful with studying another one. On the other hand such knowledge could be also confusing.

On the other hand, some experts say that transfer plays only a little role while learning grammar. They also explain that the second language acquisition is not very different from the learning of our mother tongue. There exist some sequences in learning a second language, although they do not give any particular evidence to this statement. Experts mention the existence of the “interlanguage” which was described in by Larry Selinker (1972). He suggested that every learner makes his or her own linguistic system which is something in-between L1 and L2; the learner develops it as a kind of language which could help him or her in learning.

Firstly there exist some features called *language universal*. Odlin (1989) explains them as something what is common to all language. These features come out of historical background of the languages and they are found by historical linguists. Language transfer enables them to identify the relation between languages and the change of the particular language.

Secondly some languages are considered to be more related than the others. It depends on structural and also non-structural factors or degrees of similarity. This relationship is called *language distance*. Some of the factors are more subjective and are also influenced by the intuition. Another point is the historical relationship and origin. Czech and English are not considered to be distinctively related from this point of view.

L1 transfer

L1 is considered to be a great source of errors. This phenomenon is called negative transfer which is sometimes considered to be a synonym for interference. Some researchers define contrastive analysis in this case. Contrastive analysis is the science which compares two languages. For example mentalists say that very few errors are made because of L1 transfer. Ellis (1997) introduces Larry Selinker who says that transfer is a cognitive process and L1 plays an important role in forming interlanguage; and Eric Kellerman who claims that there are only some features which are transferable, the others are not transferable.

One thing which influences L1 transfer is the learner's stage of development. Evidences could be seen on the form of requests, apologies, and refusals. On the lower stages they use only simple formulas, and later they are able to spread it. Secondly there should also be taken into account the role of consciousness while learning the second language. For example, children are undergoing this process without the conscious effort while adults acquire the language with thinking about it. Thirdly there could also appear the avoidance in the L2. This phenomenon occurs when the same feature does not exist in the L1. On the other hand this could lead to overuse of some other feature which is quite common in L1.

Borrowing and Substratum Transfer

Odlin (1989) explains the terms *borrowing and substratum transfer*. Both terms refer to the cross-linguistic influence which emerges between two languages. *Borrowing transfer* means the influence of the second language on the language previously acquired. On the other hand *substratum transfer* shows the opposite direction. It is the influence of the source language mainly the native language (in this thesis it is Czech) on the second or target language acquisition (English). Substratum transfer is the most investigated issue on the field of language transfer.

Positive and Negative Transfer

The differences and similarities between two languages can produce an effect which is known as *positive and negative transfer*:

Positive transfer. *Positive transfer* develops when there exist some similarities between native language and target language. This might help learners to develop their

skills and it could reduce the time needed for its acquisition, it provides some advantages to the learner.

Negative transfer. *Negative transfer* arises when learners bring the structures from one language to another and this could develop into the great source of errors. One of the errors which could arise from the negative transfer is according to Odlin (1989) *underproduction*. This could be realised by the inability to create efficient number of examples of some structure of the second language. This problem develops when the structure is completely different from the native language. On the other hand this leads to the opposite effect called *overproduction* as the result of *underproduction*. When there is an inability to create some structure, learners replace it with another one. As a typical example of this phenomenon is stated the overproduction of simple clauses instead of more complicated sentences. Odlin (1989) presents *production errors* as the errors made by the learners especially in writing and speaking. He divides them into three groups: *substitutions, calques, and alternations of structures*. Substitution means using the forms common in the native language in the second language. For example it involves using the Czech words in English sentence. Calques are the exact translation from native language to the second language. Most common errors are connected with the word order of the sentence or the translation of idioms. Quite common error even within the Czech learners is the translation of the structures as *There is/ There are*. The problem is the non-existence of such a structure in Czech. Last error connected with the negative transfer which Odlin (1989) presents is *misinterpretation*. This error could cause the wrong understanding of the message. Misinterpretation could emerge also with the different word order from the native language.

Next to the positive and negative transfer stands the length of the acquisition of the second language. Some languages tend to be more difficult than the others. The Foreign Service Institute (FSI) made a list of languages according to the time needed for the acquisition of this language in 1985. This research was made with the English native speakers. In comparison to other languages included in this survey, we could consider Czech being among the more difficult languages together with Japanese, Turkish, Hebrew or Hungarian. This could be an evidence of the importance of the distance of languages while learning.

Transfer in Translation

Translation from Czech into English. The research made at the University of Economics in Prague revealed the most common mistakes in the translation of the Czech students. Jančaříková (2010) claims that the level of these students is between B2 and C1 of CEFR scale. There are presented the mistakes which could be caused by the language transfer between English and Czech in the research. There is no surprise that the research revealed that the students made more mistakes in the longer sentences.

The most common mistakes are mainly caused by the different word order in English and Czech. Students copy the Czech word order into the English sentences. One of the problems is the fixed Subject – Verb –Object (S-V-O) structure of the English declarative sentence. This structure is often avoided when there is an O-V-S structure in the Czech sentence. On the other hand students are able to use passive structure which is really common for the English sentence in these cases. The result is that they can produce grammatically correct structure but the word order still remains typically Czech. Another typical mistake is the placement of adverbials into the initial or mid position what is common for a Czech structure, while it should be mentioned last in English. This problem is connected with the using of the phrase “there is” and “there are” which does not exist in Czech and it also does not have any Czech translation. This is one of the reasons why the usage of this phrase is so problematic. The placement of the adverbials (mainly adverbials of time and place) is bigger with the higher number of the clause elements. Researchers also found out that the students tend to omit some of the adverbials; they also say that this phenomenon is influenced by the uncertainty of the learners.

Statistics provide us the percentage of success in the students’ translations. It shows that about three quarters of the students left the original Czech word order even in the structures which definitely do not exist in English. 13% out of these students strictly copied the original Czech word order. 14% of the students were not able to deal with the subjectless clause.

Results of this research showed that the learners do not have so many problems with the English word order in the simple sentences. Most of the students were able to create grammatically correct sentences in these cases. Problems emerged with the position of adverbs, structures with passive, and constructions with “There” and “It” as a subject.

Translation from English into Czech. It is also interesting that the influence also works in the opposite direction. Research revealed that the learners are even influenced by English, while they are translating from Czech. This phenomenon could have a negative effect on the recipient of the text. Such mistakes could easily cause the misunderstanding. Researchers state that the students might be more concentrated on the vocabulary and grammar, and that should be the reason why they are not taking into account the problem of word order.

Statistics say that over one half of the students does not consider the mistakes in word order being so important. They think that the word order is an intuitive issue. They do not believe that it is a problem. On the other hand, vast majority of the teachers think that the problematic of word order should be taught in more detail, mainly because of the differences between these two languages. English word order is not ambiguous because of the non-existence of inflections; it could provide some variations. Position on a sentence shows the learner the syntactic function of the word or of a phrase.

Language Typology

Typology is the study of how languages are classified. There exist many ways of the classification of languages. Languages are analysed from many points; grammar, historical development etc. These analyses provide the differences and similarities among the languages which is quite important for identifying language transfer. There exist certain sentence patterns which correspond to a particular type of language.

Languages could be classified from the genealogical point of view. This typology provides several language families. Such a comparison of languages shows systematic similarities in lexicon, phonology, and grammar. If languages have a common source, they are related. There should be found some similarities especially in the basic vocabulary. These languages developed from the common ancestral language but there appeared many language changes which led to the differences. Nowadays, experts are able to distinguish about 20 language families; both English and Czech belong to the Indo-European language family which has many subgroups. Czech belongs to the Slavic subgroup and English into the Germanic subgroup. (Petrlíková, 2009)

Another type of classification is typology which provides the classification based on the grammar of the languages. Experts define several typological categories.

Phonological typology studies phonemes and their arrangements, vowels, consonants and their configuration. Morphological typology researches the way how the grammatical relationships and meanings of words are conveyed. Syntactic typology classifies the words according to their most typical syntactic structures. From this point of view both Czech and English have the subject – verb – object word order as the most typical.

Petrlíková (2009) mentions Schlegel's morphological typology according to that the languages can be divided into three basic groups. The first group are so called *synthetic languages*. These languages are inflectional which means that the form of the language is changing in order to show the grammatical meaning. Czech, Greek or Latin could be involved into this group. The second group are *analytical languages*. These are the languages with no or limited inflection which means that the word forms do not change. Grammatical functions are realised by the word order, and these languages use a lot of grammatical words. Examples of the analytical languages are English, Chinese or Vietnamese. The third group are *agglutinative languages*. In this group users add various affixes to the stem of the word which is the way how to show the grammatical function of the word. For example Turkish, Hungarian or Finnish belong to these languages.

Besides these three groups the experts also defined *polysynthetic languages* which have many compound words. Typical example of these languages is German. *Interflexional languages* make the form by change of the sound in the base of the word. Arabic could be involved among these languages.

English Language

All languages keep changing and it has to be taken into account while analyzing them. English developed from the synthetic into the analytical language group during a long period of time. Old English used to be an inflected language as many other languages from the Indo-European family. There was a highly developed system of inflections. Modern English lost the inflectional ways of syntactic linking. It has limited number of inflections, and a large number of function words.

English has a fixed word order with the regular word order of a common declarative sentence (S – V – O). This sentence pattern is enabled even in the interrogative sentences where the analytical type of the predicate forms the question, i.e. *Did you see me?* The analytical predicate is evident also in the negative sentence: *No, I didn't see you.*

Changes of the word order could mean the changes of the meaning, i.e. *silk blouse* – *blouse silk*.

English is highly idiomatic, grammaticized and mostly monosyllabic language. Rivlina (n.d.) explains this tendency of English in her article. “The analytical trend has also deeply affected the English vocabulary and its mechanisms of lexical derivation. The morphological structure of the typical modern English word has become predominantly monosyllabic, stable, equivalent to the root and the stem like in agglutinating languages, cf.: work – worker, working, works. The possibilities of affixation have been limited: actually, most of the derivational affixes in Modern English have been borrowed from either Latin or French.” (Rivlina, n.d.)

The monosyllabic vocabulary led to the specific pattern of the word stress. Still highly important stress is on the first syllable while there is also relevant the so called secondary stress. Functional words remain mostly unstressed. So the speech has no regular beats.

There are ten parts of speech, the same number as in Czech. Some of the words could be easily match to the particular part of speech according to their suffixes, some suffixes could be ambiguous. Besides these words, there are words which do not have such a signalling in English. So there exist words which could belong to the several parts of speech (i.e. *down*, *back*, *like*). A specific part of speech could be recognized also by the word stress.

Rivlina (n. d.) cites in her article the linguist Vladimir Dmitrievich Arakin, according to him English is a slightly inflecting language with a predominance of agglutinative features and adjunction, and with no fusion between the morphemes.

Czech Language

Czech belongs to the synthetic languages of the Indo-European language family, it is so called inflectional type of language because the flectional principal is highly dominant there. This language has developed declension and conjugation where one inflection could express many grammatical categories (case, number, person, tense etc.) There exists also an analytical principal which connects particular prepositions with particular cases or while making some of the grammatical categories (past tense, passive,

comparison of adverbs etc.) Czech also has some features of the agglutinative languages. These could appear within derivation of words by prefixes and suffixes.

The most typical in Czech is the stress on the first syllable of the word, in some cases the stress is on the preposition which might help the listener in identifying the word within the speech, and very often it is the source for the language transfer. The pronunciation is mostly fixed; there can appear some variations in the stream of speech; i.e. *naschledanou* or *nazhledanou*. But the standard pronunciation is given.

Czech has also 10 parts of speech where five of them are the subjects of inflection. Inflection is realized by declination (nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals) and conjugation (verbs). Declination could distinguish seven grammatical cases within two numbers (singular and plural and in some particular cases dual number), and it has three grammatical genders (feminine, masculine, and neuter). The genders are distinguished according to their paradigms. Conjugation provides three persons in two numbers (singular and plural), three basic tenses (past, present and future), three moods (indicative, imperative, and conditional), two verbal voices (active and passive), and verbal aspect (perfective and imperfective). Czech has five classes with the paradigms; according to this system the users are able to create right grammatical form of the word.

Czenglish

Czenglish is a blend of Czech and English words. This term was first mentioned by Don Sparling (1990) who used it for the wrong usage of English by the Czech speakers. This means that English words are used in the same way as in Czech which leads to a lot of misunderstandings. It is no surprise that the Czechs commonly understand such expressions; the problem would appear with foreigners. Czechs are not the only one nation who developed this mixture of the native language and English; it is possible to find similar influence in many other languages, i.e. Spanglish, Germanglish etc. Don Sparling (1990) described many common mistakes of Czechs using English in his book. Unfortunately it is not possible to describe here all of them but I would like to mention at least some of the common Czech mistakes according to Sparling (1990):

- **False friends.** It is often confusing to use so called false friends. These are the words which sound similarly in Czech and in English but they have different meaning. For example *actual problem* means *real problem* in English, while in Czech the word *aktuální*

means *current* or *topical* problem. There are a lot of these confusing words in both languages. Czechs also use many words which sound foreign in Czech and so they use it in English thinking that the native speaker will understand. The word *brigade* exists in English but it does not mean *part time job* but some organized group of people, such as *fire brigade*. The word *chief* does not have the same meaning as the word *boss* but the Czechs often consider it to be the same, under the influence of the mother tongue.

- **Articles.** Czechs have the problems with the articles in English. The main reason for these mistakes is the non existence of such a grammatical expression in Czech; Czechs are influenced by their mother tongue and so they use it wrongly. It is also difficult to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns in English what is connected with the usage of articles.

- **Tenses.** Regarding tenses it is difficult for Czechs to understand the existence of present perfect. The student has to be familiar with the fact that it is in fact present tense and the situation is somehow connected with the past. Czechs very often confuse and do not understand the difference between simple and continuous tenses. These misunderstandings occur because there is not similar grammar in Czech. Reported speech is also hard to understand. Another point is a usage of *used to* for the past while *be used to* and *get used to* has completely different meaning.

- **Prepositions.** The Czechs often use the prepositions in the wrong way. For example there exist a lot of so called phrase words in English which are the words connected with a particular preposition. The learner has no possibility; he or she simply has to learn it. The most common mistakes are according to Sparling: “*according to* (instead of *in my opinion*), *against* (instead of *for an illness*), *from* (instead of *by an author*), *on* (instead of *at a place*).

Sparling (1990) also introduces many other examples of the wrong usage and confusion of English expressions; there are also involved phenomena such as: expressing age, addressing people, politeness, typically Czech expressions, similar expressions, negation, punctuation, word order, adjectives etc.

Interlanguage

Larry Selinker was an American linguist introduced by Ellis (1997) who came out with the term interlanguage. He claimed that interlanguage is a unique linguistic system

which is developed by every language learner. It is built on the knowledge of L1 and L2 but still it is different from both languages. According to Ellis (1997), the concept of interlanguage involves some premises about L2 acquisition. For example, the learner constructs his or her own system of rules which correspond with comprehension and production of their L2. These rules are modified according to the development of learning. Various errors occur within different stages of development.

Non-structural Factors in Transfer

Individuality

Many believe that learners have certain characteristics which may lead to more or less successful language acquisition. Researchers claim that there exist some features which could affect second language learning but it is very hard to support this theory. For example, it is said that extroverts are more successful in language learning; assertiveness and adventurousness are among the characteristics which could help in language learning. Otherwise there is no clear relationship between personality and second language acquisition.

Harley (1990) mentions that for example intelligence plays the great role in the learning of the second language and even many studies confirm this opinion. Researchers also take into account factors as empathy, field independence, and other cognitive styles; risk-taking, self-esteem, dominance, talkativeness, and responsiveness. Skehan (1989) made a study where he discovered that the children between 13 and 16 years of age could perform better in their second language if they developed quickly their first language. He also found the relation to family background, parental education, and parental literacy. Family strongly influences the child, Skehan (1989) refers to the ability of the children to communicate, ask questions, memorize, plan etc. These skills could be taught in the family; family is also the source of motivation for the children. On the contrary, students can differ in the second language acquisition even if their social background is the same. The important point is here also the native ability.

Peter Skehan (1989) also analyse the aptitude towards language learning in his study. Ellis (1997) calls this phenomenon language aptitude which is generally known as the extent to which are the students able to learn an L2. There have been made several researches on how the language aptitude influenced the second language acquisition. The

result was that the process of language learning is very strongly related to the language aptitude. The students with the higher score in language aptitude tests achieve higher levels of proficiency in L2 learning, and they are also faster learners, states Ellis (1997). Both Skehan (1989) and Ellis (1997) mention Carroll's models which mark individual differences in second language learning. This model provides several components:

- 1. Phonetic coding ability – an ability to identify distinct sounds, to form associations between those sounds and symbols representing them, and to retain these associations.
- 2. Grammatical sensitivity – the ability to recognize the grammatical functions of words (or other linguistic entities) in sentence structures.
- 3. Rote learning ability for foreign language materials – the ability to learn associations between sounds and meanings rapidly and efficiently, and to retain these associations;
- and 4. Inductive language learning ability – the ability to infer or induce the rules governing a set of language materials, given samples of language materials that permit such inferences. (Harley, 1990, p. 164)

Lightbown and Spada (1993) provide us the model of a good language learner. "A good language learner: is a willing and accurate guesser, tries to get a message across even in specific language knowledge is lacking, is willing to make mistakes, constantly looks for patterns in the language, practices as often as possible, analyses his or her own speech and the speech of others, attends to whether his or her performance meets the standards he or she has learned, enjoys grammatical exercises, begins learning in childhood, has above-average IQ, has good academic skills, has a good self-image and lots of confidence." (p.34)

Motivation

"Motivation involves the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree of effort that learners make to learn an L2. Various kinds of motivation have been identified; instrumental, integrative, resultative, and intrinsic." (Ellis, 1997, p. 75)

Instrumental motivation means the effort to some reason, mainly to pass the test or some examination, to get a job etc. Integrative motivation involves the interest in the culture and also the people of the studied language. Resultative motivation represents the opposite procedure. Students are more motivated with the better results in the learning of

the language. Intrinsic motivation flows from the personal interest of every learner; students are personally involved in the topic.

Ellis (1997) summarizes the phenomenon of motivation with the notice that every learner will be probably motivated from the several reasons, these types could be combined. He also claims that motivation is dynamic process; it depends on the context, on the situation and many other factors. But there is no doubt that the motivation and positive attitude are related to success in second language learning.

Learning strategies

Every student has his or her own strategies and techniques how to learn an L2. Ellis (1997) claims that these strategies are typically problem-oriented, apart from behavioural, and mental. Experts are trying to identify the best learning strategies what is not really an easy issue. It seems that the best strategies are used by the successful learners. Good students not only pay attention to the form and meaning of the issue but they are also very active, flexible and appropriate in their language learning styles. Studies showed that successful learners use more strategies according to what they are learning in the particular time. Every teacher should try to find out which strategy works to his or her own students and he or she should be able to train the students in using such strategies.

Age of Acquisition

Harley (1987) tried to verify the influence of age on the acquisition of the language. There were created two groups of students with similar IQ. These students were originally English speaking and they were learning French. One group had started to learn French in the kindergarten, while the second one started with studying English several years later, in the grade 7. This study tested the oral proficiency of the students in the grade 10.

“Results with respect to verbs indicated that the early immersion students were closer to the native speakers on a number of features, such as use of imperfect and the conditionals, and the placement of object pronouns in clitic position before the verb. On other verb features, however, such as time distinctions, number and person agreement rules, and vocabulary range, they were no further ahead than the late-entry groups. In the area of fluency, some advantages were found for the early immersion students over the other language groups, although as might be expected, none of the learner groups was a

fluent as the native speakers. The early immersion group produced fewer disfluencies or certain kinds than the late-entry groups, and they were less likely to use hesitations in within-phrase locations where they could be considered more disruptive or discourse coherence.” (Harley,1990, p.132)

All in all, early immersion students should have some advantages in second language acquisition. But these advantages are not so evident in general. It is known that younger learners do not need so much time for the language acquisition. By contrast, older learners have more academic skills, and they are influenced by the motivational factors, of course. Another advantage of late entry is the access to the written forms of the language. They are more in touch with the code of the language in the text. On the other hand, they are learning through the more difficult task, they need more effort for the acquisition. But they have more opportunities to produce the language than the younger ones. Younger children could suffer from the lack of stimulus, and this is the reason why they produce simpler and slower language; they have limited vocabulary. But they are not influenced in the negative way, they are able to correct themselves more than the adults are.

Language Transfer in Linguistics

Syntax

A great deal of transfer was confirmed in the field of syntax. Researchers found that foreign students find the biggest difficulties in the field of *word order, negative, and relative clauses*.

Word Order. Odlin (1989) explains the importance of the studies in the field of word order and its influence on the learners of the second language. There were made many researches and studies on this topic, and experts revealed the relevance of the word order in English. The students can understand the language better, and it is also possible to avoid the language transfer by knowledge of the language and its rules. (p.85)

As already mentioned, the word order in English is rather rigid while the Czech word order is flexible. Odlin (1989) claims that rigidity or flexibility could be transferable while learning some second languages. For example, Czech speakers could use various sentence patterns for the one rigid sentence pattern in English. This phenomenon is considered to be negative transfer. The rigidity might be very helpful in understanding

English; especially young learners in their early stages of learning appreciate the fixed word order.

Relative Clauses. Odlin (1989) cites in his book one of the researchers who mentions the problematic of the position of words and phrases in a clause and the position of clauses in a sentence. On one hand there is a tendency in SOV languages that the relative clauses tend to precede the noun they modify, and on the other hand, the relative clauses in VSO (and most SVO) languages rather follow the noun (p. 97). When the two languages have different principle in branching within the relative clause, the acquisition of the syntax could be more difficult.

The nouns and pronouns play the important roles in English relative clauses. According to Odlin (1989), the sentence *The musician who played at the concerts is from China.* (p. 99) contains the domain noun and the clause which modifies the noun. The noun (musician) and the pronoun (who) have the same grammatical role; they function as a subject of the sentence. But the pronoun could have different grammatical form from the domain noun (direct object, indirect object, genitive), and then there is a problem with the influence of the native language. Not all the languages have the syntactic equivalents to all the relative clauses which exist in English.

Negation. Some researchers imply negation into the problem of word order but there exist some features which might be taken into account. The role of word order in negation can not be omitted. In English it is possible to form the negation simply with one word (no, not). There also exist words, prefixes and suffixes which might also function as negators; for example *un-*, *in-*, *dis-*, *non-*, *-less*. The main problem for the Czech learners is often the nonexistence of multiple negations within one sentence. Multiple negation is not grammatically correct.

Phonetics

Odlin (1989) also deals with the characteristics of phonetics. It is quite common that two languages have different realization of sounds which can be pronounced and also received differently than it is common in the native language. Then it is necessary to explain and describe the characteristics of the sound. The phonetics also depends on the phonemic system of a language. For example, the non existence of the vowels as /e/ and /æ/ in Czech causes the big problems in pronunciation of English. Moreover it is very

difficult for the Czech learners to distinguish between such vowels. Phonemic errors arise especially when the phonemic system of the two languages differ.

Next to the segmental contrasts, Odlin (1989) also mentions suprasegmental contrast in language, such as stress, rhythm, tone, and others. The stress could bear even the meaning of the word; stress reflects the native language influence. The pitch level could also have some influence on understanding. Intonation signals not only the emotions of the speaker but it also could help the speaker by identifying the structure of the utterance. The similarity in phonemics of the two languages might help the learner while even studying the syntax (p.117).

Morphology

Morphology is a study of the form of the words in a given language. As mentioned above, Czech and English are different languages from the typological point of view and so the morphology of these languages also differs. Morphology is often divided into several types according to the word formation and inflection in a given language. Inflection often defines grammatical categories like number, gender, tense, aspect, case, and person. While Czech is considered to be inflected language, English lost the most of its inflectional forms during the historical development.

Lexicology

Language transfer in lexicology appears for example within the so called *false friends* that are the example of the interference between languages. There exist a large number of *false friends* between Czech and English. Some of them are mentioned below (Vít, n. d.).

False friends.

| <i>English</i> | <i>Czech</i> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| actual | vlastní, opravdový (topical, current) |
| billion | billion (trillion) |
| chef | šéf (boss) |
| concrete | konkrétní (particular) |
| desk | deska (board) |
| eventual | eventuální (possible) |

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| front | fronta (line, queue) |
| receipt | recept (prescription, recipe) |
| sympathetic | sympatický (nice, likeable) |

The Theoretical Background chapter suggests the most typical problems while learning of the second language and their possible sources. Objectives of this chapter are to provide the overview of some factors influencing the language transfer and to outline the basic problems which might occur while learning of the second language. One of the key factors is the typological difference between English and Czech and it causes many other problems in language learning. Word order, pronunciation, spelling, and even vocabulary are involved in the most common mistakes. These assumptions are investigated in the research part of the thesis. This chapter should also provide some theoretical basis for the methodological part of the thesis. The goal is to find out to which extent the learners are influenced by their native language while learning English, and how the transfer is realized.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

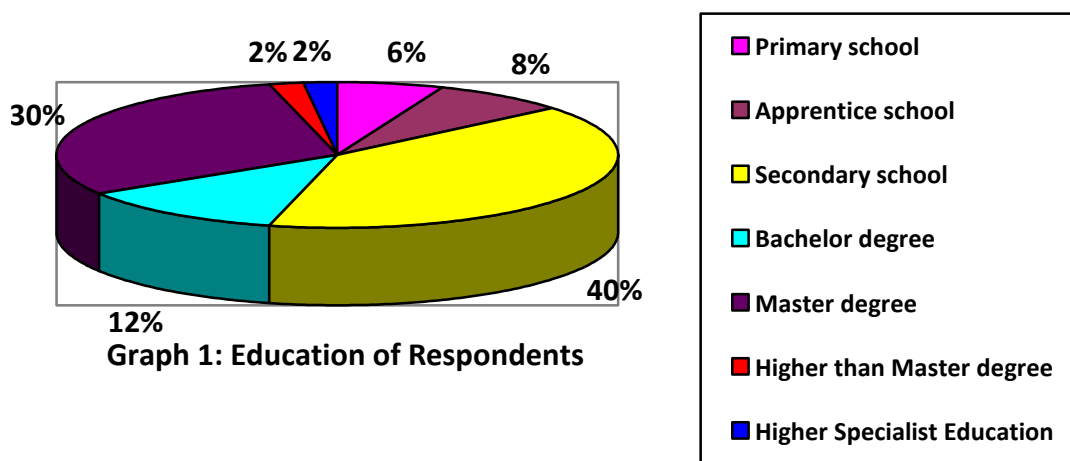
This chapter outlines the research methodology used to investigate the occurrence of language transfer among students of a language school. According to the theoretical background chapter, there exist some features of transfer while learning English as a second language. The main question of the research is to find out the most problematic aspects of adult Czech learners in English, and how Czech impacts English. The tool of the research was a questionnaire (provided as an appendix) which covers the personal information about the subjects of the research; their opinions on the language learning and its difficulties. It also suggests some possible problems in learning English in connection with language transfer. Further the practical part of the questionnaire follows where the students were required to demonstrate their practical knowledge of the language. All the questions were formed regarding language transfer. The questions follow the suggestions made in the theoretical part of the thesis. All the questions were formed regarding language transfer.

Respondents

The research was done among students of a language school in Plzen during March 2014. The students were asked to fill out a questionnaire; they were not allowed to use any supporting materials, such as dictionaries, the internet, or other devices, while filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed among the students in a paper form; it was also possible to fill out the questionnaire online but this opportunity was used only by 7 of them. The questions were formed in Czech and the students had 30 minutes to provide their responses.

The first part of the questionnaire dealt with the demographics of the respondents, their motivation for English learning and the usage of the language. The second part investigates language skills and particular linguistic problems. Students are also required to compare Czech and English from their point of view. Next the pronunciation is examined. Then the students have to decide about the usage of the given sentences; this task is based on the word order of both languages. Then they should translate Czech sentences into English and finally they should deal with some common false friends. Questionnaires in Czech and English are provided as an appendix.

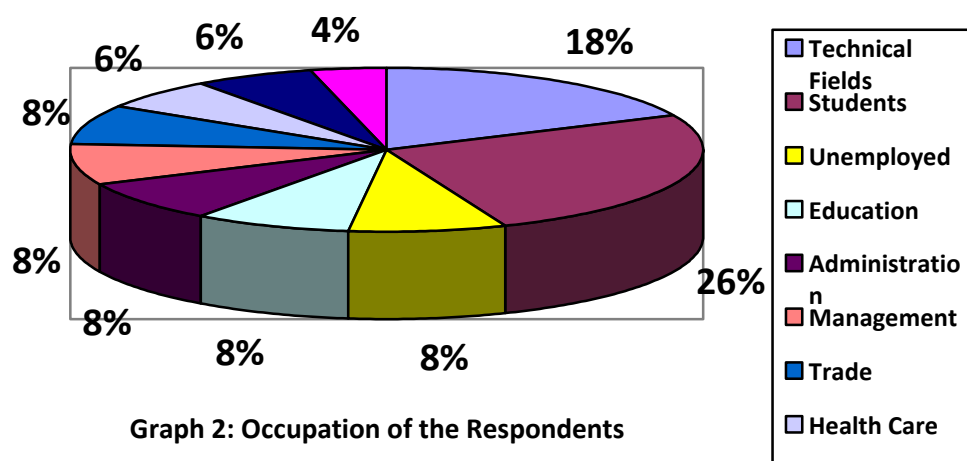
Fifty respondents answered the questions: 21 men and 29 women. The age of the respondents was from 17 to 50, when the average age was 31. It is possible to claim that the respondents are only adults. The highest achieved education and occupation of the students were quite diverse (see below). The students were also required to estimate their level of English and how long they had studied this language. Some exceptions appeared but mostly the level of the students diverges from A1 to B1 according to the CEFR scales of language proficiency. The length of learning English is much wider, from the beginners who started to learn English a few months ago to long term students.



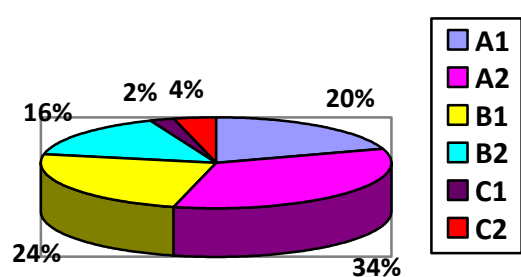
As it is visible in Graph 1, most of the respondents have at least secondary school or higher education. People who finished secondary school are the biggest group of the respondents (40%); the master degree graduates are the second biggest group (30%). There also appeared students who had not finished their education yet, which has to be taken into account. The number of students of a secondary school or university in the research is 13, which means 26 % of the total number of respondents.

The occupation of the respondents is very diverse. As already mentioned, 26% of the people still attend school. We can see in Graph 2 that a half of the respondents work in the technical areas, or they are students and people who are unemployed.

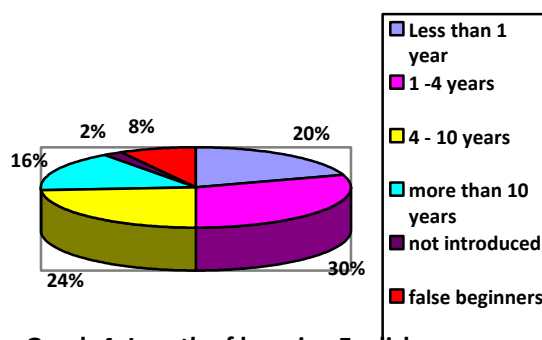
Occupation and education of the respondents could be quite important while investigating language transfer. People with different education have different skills in learning languages and might have different needs for understanding the principles of the language. People with technical skills might try to find the logic and correspondence between English and Czech.



There is no exact correspondence between the length of learning and the level of English. Many of the respondents considered themselves being a very low level (A1) even after years of studying this language. On the other hand, there are some respondents who estimated their level being B2, and further they made many basic mistakes in the practical part of the questionnaire. The level of the students is quite important for language transfer; the learners should have at least some basic knowledge to be able to answer the questions. The language school provided many of the so called false beginners who have started learning English several times and they are still not able to move their language level up.



Graph 3: Language Levels (CEFR)



Graph 4: Length of learning English

As mentioned before, most of the respondents described themselves as being from A1 to B1 level. This question is not probably really objective because some of them may not know anything about the CEFR levels. There were only 3 people ranked among C learners. All the 3 respondents were girls.

Regarding the time length of learning the language, I have decided to divide the respondents into 6 categories. 4 people (8%) described themselves as being false

beginners; they mentioned repeated starting points and longer time of studying the language; set in years. 1 respondent did not answer this question. Many of the learners stated that they had studied English for about 4 years; many of them also mentioned that they studied English at a secondary school and now they are starting again. The secondary school education seems to be a crucial point for the knowledge of English of the learners which also corresponds with the fact that more than a half of the respondents are secondary school educated.

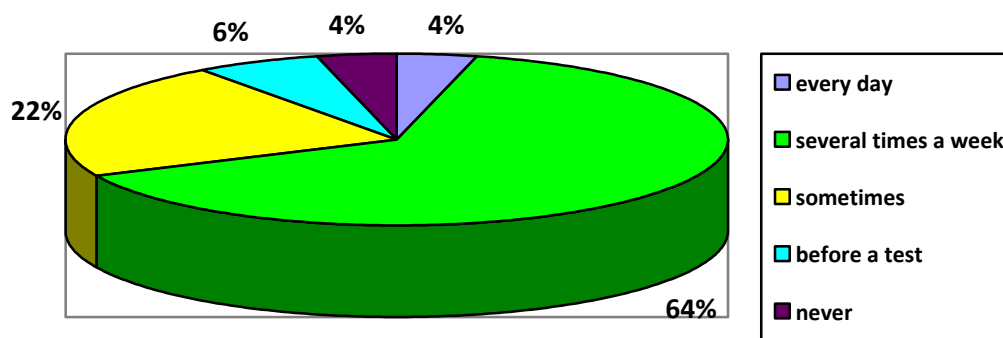
This section introduced the respondents of the questionnaire and outlined the structure of the questionnaire as the method of the research. In the following section, I present the results of the research. The results are compared with the statements of the theoretical background section. The commentaries follow the results.

IV. RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES

In this section, the results of the research are presented. There were 50 respondents answering the questionnaire. The questions regarding to respondents and their attitude to English are introduced in the first part of the questionnaire. Then, the questions regarding to language skills and differences between Czech and English according to the respondents follow. Finally, the practical knowledge of the language is introduced. Individual questions are described separately by means of figures or by summaries of particular responses of the respondents. The figures show the percentage of answers given to the particular response. In one case the figure is described using the number of points achieved from the respondents. Further on, the commentaries on the results follow. Here the results are put into the context with each other and compared. The emphasis is given on possible features of transfer.

Results

Question: How often do you learn English? As the figure below shows, 64% of the respondents learn English several times a week; 22% stated that they learn English sometimes. It means that most of the respondents learn English more or less regularly. Only 2 students (4% of the respondents) learn English every day. The same number (4% of the respondents) does not learn English at all.

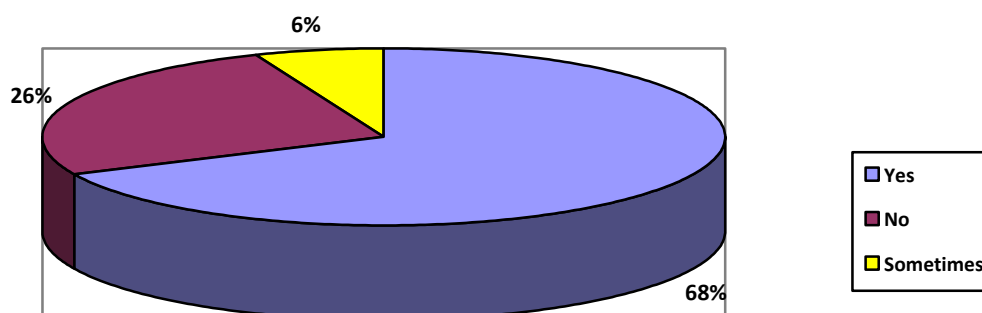


Graph 5: How often do you learn English?

Question: Why are you learning English? The respondents mostly stated more than one possible answer, however, nearly half of them (23 people out of 50) mentioned that they were learning English because of their work, better position or getting a new job. Some of them even want to work abroad. A very frequent answer was also learning of personal interests. Seventeen respondents mentioned that they simply want to learn

English; it is their hobby or they like the language. That English is unnecessary these days was mentioned several times; a lot of information nowadays is presented in English (internet etc.). Nearly a third of the respondents (15) introduced travelling as the main reason for learning English. Some mentioned that they want to understand while they are on holiday, some want to travel for a long term. Four people want to study abroad; one person even mentioned foreign friends as the reason for learning English.

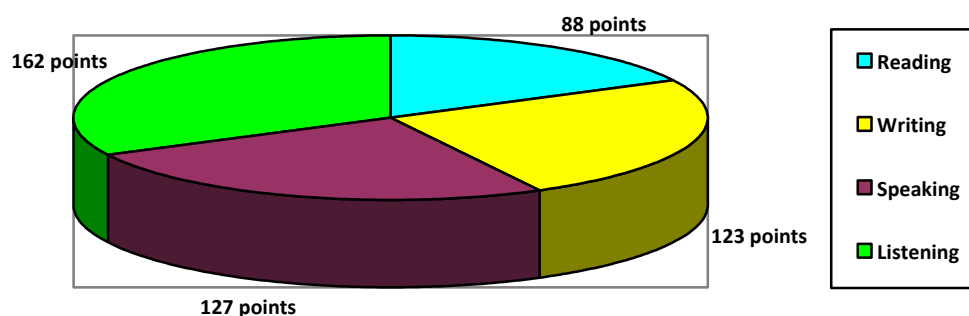
Question: Do you learn/use English out of school? As the figure below shows, 68% of the respondents use English not only at school. Among the most frequented answers below are: work (e-mails, telephone, or even personal interaction), or travelling. Nine students watch films or serials, listen to English songs, or they try to read books in English. Three people use English especially on the internet, and four of them communicate with foreign friends. As Graph 6 shows, 26% of the respondents, which means 13 people, do not use English out of school. Most of them regret it and hope they will have some opportunity in the future. Those, who use English sometimes, mention work or travelling as the reason for using the language.



Graph 6: Do you learn/use English out of school?

Question: Order the following skills from the easiest one (1) to the most difficult (4). The respondents were supposed to order four language skills (speaking, writing, reading, and listening) according to the level of difficulty in their opinion in this question. Graph 7 shows the results according to the points which were given to the particular skill. More points mean a more difficult skill. As we can see, the respondents consider listening being the most difficult skill. On the other hand, the results could be considered to be quite balanced; speaking and writing got nearly the same amount of

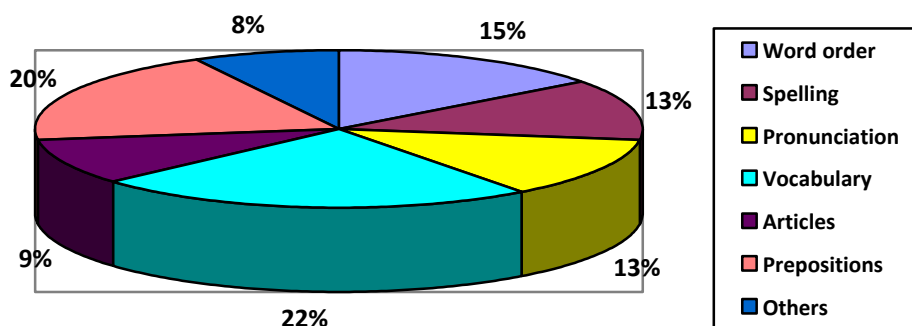
points. The students of the language school believe that reading is the easiest skill in English.



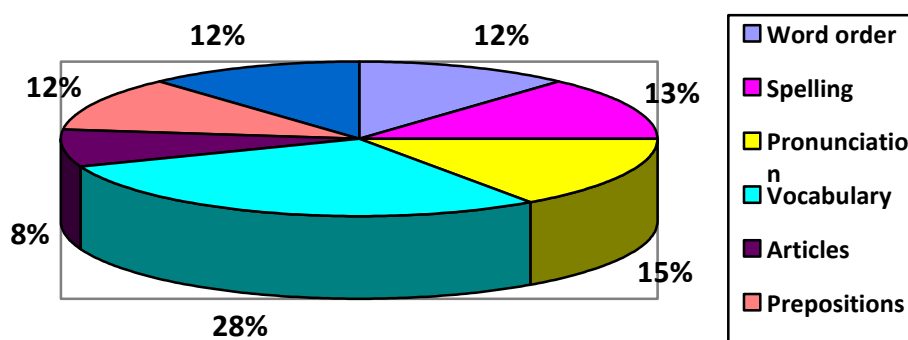
Graph 7: Language skills

Question: What causes you difficulties? The respondents were asked here to mark phenomena which are difficult for them. More responses were possible. A total number of responses on this question was 128. As visible in Graph 8, vocabulary (22%) and prepositions (20%) were considered to be the most difficult. As evident, 15% of the respondents included word order in the most difficult features. 13% of them got spelling together with pronunciation as the most difficult. 9% of the respondents found articles as a problem. 8% of the students had other problems. The respondents mentioned problems with tenses in English which is probably connected with the existence of irregular verbs. Students find it difficult to use the right tense in the sentence. Listening, especially to the native speakers, and understanding of the text is also mentioned among the difficulties. Conversation together with fluency of the speech was also mentioned. Even the phrasal verbs had their place in this category. One respondent stated grammar in general as the main problem.

Graph 9 shows the most difficult features. The respondents were asked to mark only one problem in contrary to the previous graph. The results are mostly identical; vocabulary still remains the most problematic one (30% of the answers), the rest of the options can be found nearly at the same level, as visible from the figure.



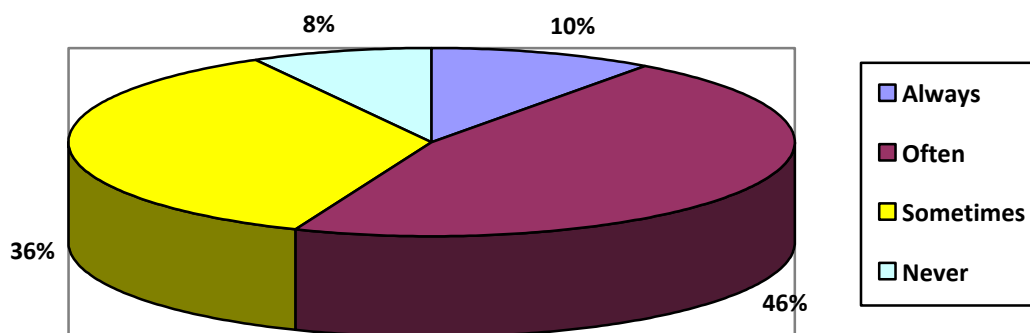
Graph 8: What causes you difficulties?



Graph 9: The most difficult phenomenon

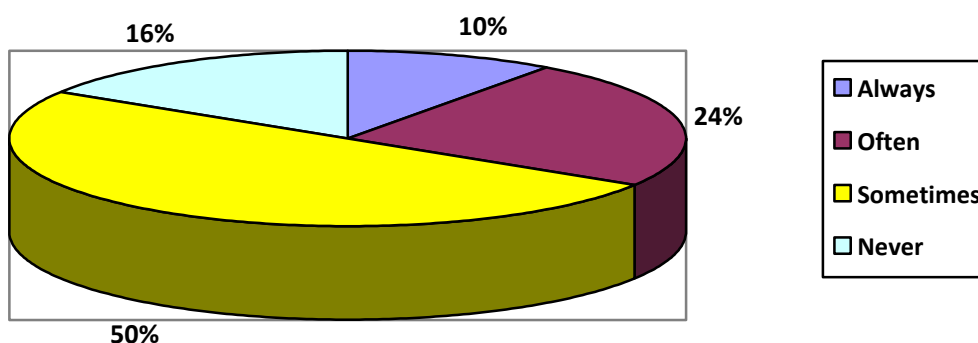
Question: In what way is English different from Czech? The respondents were supposed to answer this question from their point of view. Many of them stated that English is simply a different language and some of them claimed that the differences are in everything. Some of them agreed that English is simpler than Czech. The word order item was also frequently mentioned. Further, respondents mentioned the differences between written and spoken form of the English language. Even, there appeared an opinion that the difference is in the extent of both languages; English is spoken over the whole world.

Question: I use Czech while creating English sentences. The respondents were supposed to mark one of the following options of the given question. As evident from the figure below, 46% of Czech learners use Czech to help them to create an English sentence. Further, 36% of the subjects do this only sometimes, while 10% of them claim that they use Czech every time they are expressing themselves in English. 8% (4 people of total 50 respondents) say that they never use Czech while creating sentences in English.



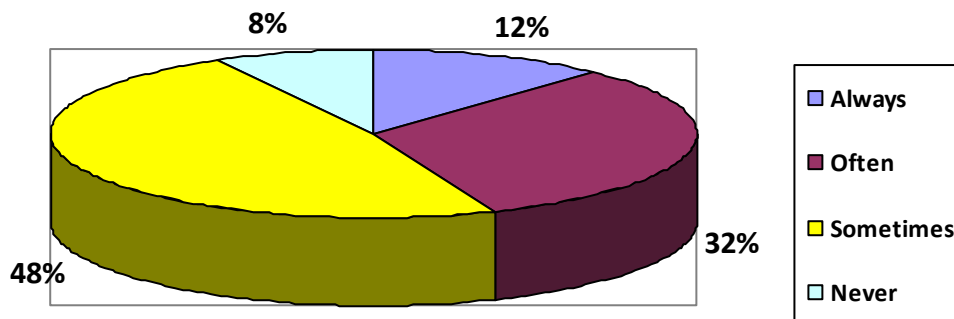
Graph 10: I use Czech while creating English sentences.

Question: I am careful about English stress while speaking. As visible from Graph 11, half of the respondents are careful about the right stress in English only sometimes. 24% of them cares about the stress often, while 16% of the subjects never. Only 10% of the respondents are careful about the stress all the time.



Graph 11: I am careful about English stress while speaking.

Question: I am trying to think in English while speaking. The figure below shows the responses on this statement. 48% of the subjects sometimes think in English while speaking English. 32% of them do this often and 12% of them stated that they always think in English while speaking. 8% of the respondents have not tried to think in English yet.



Graph 12: I am trying to think in English while speaking.

Question: How would you pronounce the following words? The respondents were asked to write the pronunciation of 6 words. At the same time they should mark the stress within the words. Correct pronunciation is checked according to Cambridge dictionary.

Three. Twenty respondents (40%) were able to express the right pronunciation of this word: [θri:]. Fourteen students would read it with the consonant [t] at the beginning, [tri:]. Three people thought that the correct pronunciation of the word is [sri:], two people would pronounce the word like [fri:]. There also appeared several separated answers like [tsri:], [ree], and [sfri:]. Three people simply rewrite the written form [three]. The stress was marked on the first syllable which is correct; some students did not mark the stress at all.

Christmas. Correct pronunciation of this word is [krisməs]. I received this answer from 20% (10 people) of the respondents. 28% of the subjects thought that the pronunciation is [krismas], 12% of them would pronounce it like [christmas]. There appeared a lot of variations of pronunciation of this word such as [kristmas], [chrisms], [christmes]. Further, 68% of the respondents would pronounce [k] at the beginning of the word, 32% of them would say [ch]. Stress, if marked, was put on the first syllable which is correct.

Hotel. 32% of the subjects pronounced this word like [houtel], which could be considered a correct answer in the American English according to Cambridge dictionary. Only one person stated the exact pronunciation [həutel], which is stated in Cambridge dictionary as a British version of the pronunciation. 22% of the respondents said [hotel], and another 22% of the subjects said [houtl]. Four people (8% of the respondents) mentioned [hotl] as their way of pronunciation. The stress was not always stated, however, 50% of the subjects would put it on the first syllable and the same amount of the respondents would put it on the second syllable which is considered to be correct.

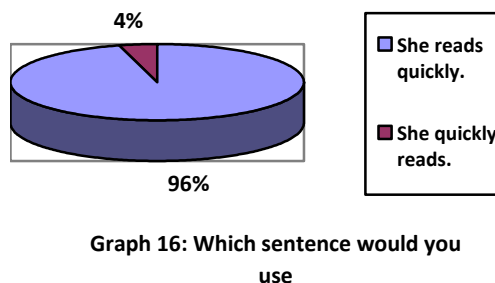
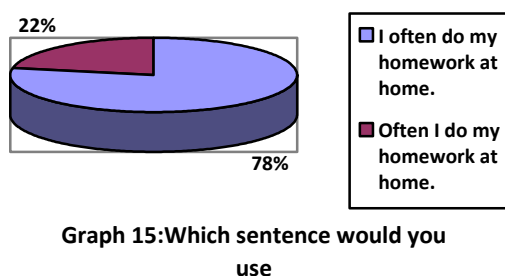
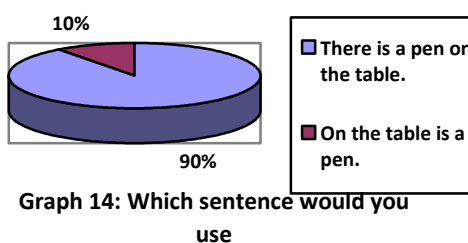
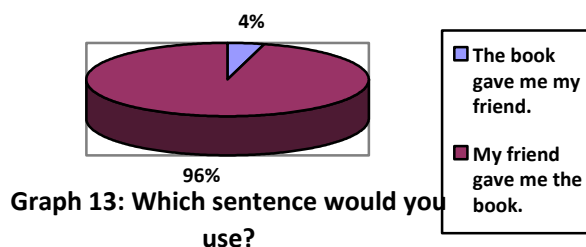
Bought. 42% of the respondents were able to pronounce this word correctly [bo:t]. One person even mentioned the American pronunciation [ba:t]. The rest of the respondents mentioned a lot of ways how to pronounce this word, very often they expressed [ou] in the middle of the word. Again, the most of the respondents did not mark the stress. From those who did it, 50% of the subjects would stress the letter [o], 38% of them would stress the

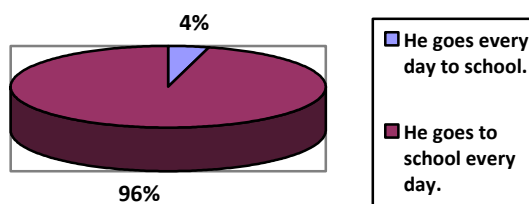
letter [b], and 12% of them would stress the letter [t]. Basically, correct stress is on the first syllable of this word.

Life. 80% of the respondents were able to pronounce this word correctly [laɪf]. 18% of them would say [lif], and 1 person (2% of the subjects) stated [lijf] as the way of pronunciation of this word. Stress, if marked, was put correctly on the first syllable of the word.

Hand. 82% of them said [hend] while pronouncing this word. 13% of them would say [hænd]; this pronunciation is introduced as the correct one in Cambridge dictionary. 2% would say [hand], or even [hant]. All of the respondents, who marked the stress, stressed the first syllable.

Question: Which sentence would you use? In this set of questions, the respondents were supposed to decide which sentence they would use. These questions were testing the word order in the English sentence. As visible in Graphs 13 to 17, the respondents were mostly able to identify the correct sentence for more than 90%. However, as evident in Graph 15, the third couple of sentences seems to be the most problematic. Further description and explanation of these questions is provided in the next part of the thesis.





Graph 17: Which sentence would you use

Question: Translate into English. Next, the respondents were asked to translate five questions from Czech into English. The sentences were chosen to test the knowledge of the word order in the sentence, and the knowledge of some phrases or vocabulary.

Často chodím pozdě domů. 48% of the respondents translated this sentence: *I often go home late* which could be partly considered being correct. It was better to use the verbs *come* or *arrive* instead of *go* which wrote only 5 people. 6% of the students used the word *often* at the beginning of the sentence what could be also considered to be the right answer. The rest of the respondents used wrong order of the words in the sentence or they did not know some expressions at all or they confused them. Further details are described in the commentaries part of the thesis.

Mám hlad. 98% of all the respondents translated this sentence correctly; *I am hungry* or *I'm hungry*. Only one person (2% of respondents) missed the word *am* in this sentence, so the only one wrong translation was *I hungry*.

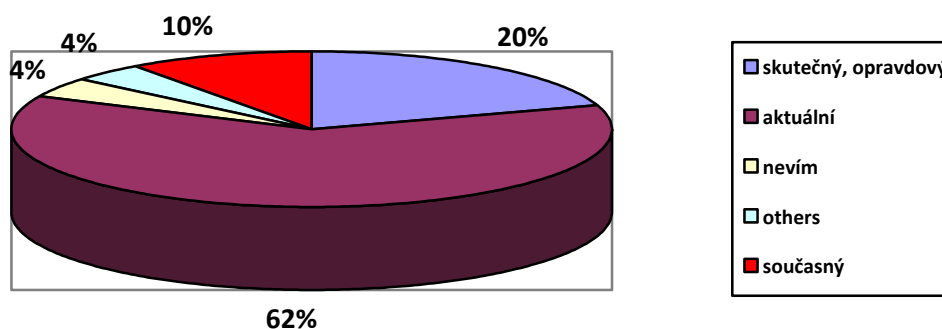
Mám moc rád knedlíky. 58% of the respondents stated one of the possible translated versions which are considered to be right. The best translation stated was *I like dumplings very much*. Among the others could be mentioned *I really like/love dumplings* or *I like dumplings a lot*. 16% of them wrote simply *I like dumpling* without expressing how much and without plural form. The rest of the responses were not complete or were not translated correctly. 8% of the respondents did not translate the sentence.

Řeknu ti příběh. 46% of the students included in this questionnaire translated this sentence in the right way: *I will/am going to tell you a story*. 24% of the subjects omitted words indicating the future tense: *I tell you a story*. 10% confused the word *tell* with the word *say*: *I say you a story*. 10% of the respondents did not answer this question. The rest of the answers had a wrong word order, or the word *you* was misinterpreted. The respondents omitted the word *you* at all, or they used it with some preposition.

Dej to té dívce. *Give it to that girl* - is the best translation of this sentences which was provided by 50% of the students. 20% of them omitted the word *to* in this sentence so the final form of the sentence was *Give it that girl*. 8% of the respondents wrote *You give it this girl*. 4% of the subjects did not provide any response. In the rest of the responses, there were words missing or they were not used correctly.

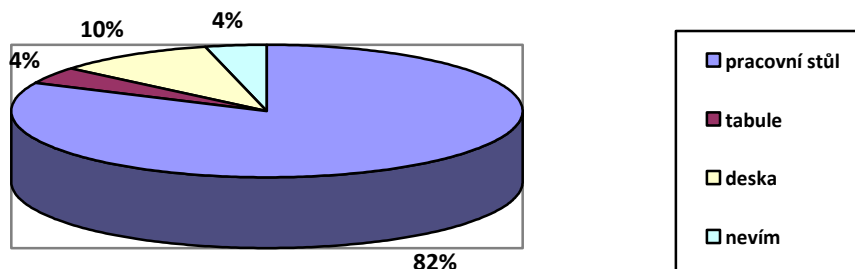
Question: Translate the words into Czech. In the last part of the questionnaire, the respondents were supposed to translate English words into Czech. These words are in the category of so called false friends.

Actual. As visible in Graph 18, 20% of the respondents provided correct translation of this word which is *skutečný, opravdový* or *vlastní* in Czech. 62% of the students thought that the correct translation of this word is *aktuální* (*topical* in English) which the false friend to *actual* in Czech is. 10% of the students stated that the translation is *současný* (*current* in English). Last 8% of them did not answer this section or gave a completely wrong Czech equivalent.



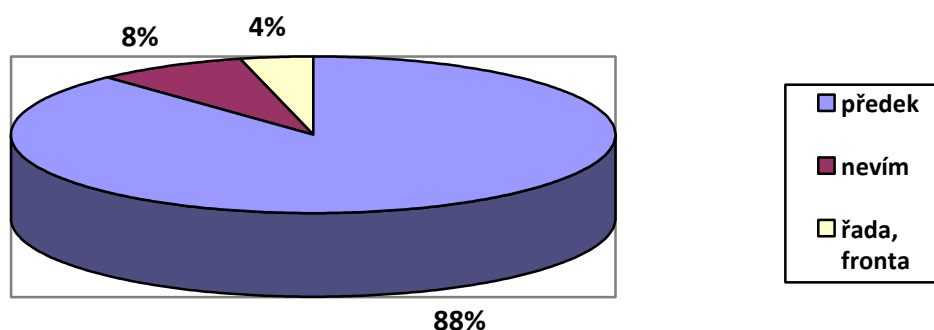
Graph 18: Actual

Desk. As evident in Graph 19, 82% of the respondents wrote the correct translation of this false friend; *pracovní stůl*. 10% of the respondents provided *deska* in Czech (*board* in English) as the equivalent to *desk*. These two words are Czech – English false friends. 4% of the students think that the word *desk* means *tabule* in Czech (*whiteboard or blackboard* in English). And 4% of them did not know the answer.



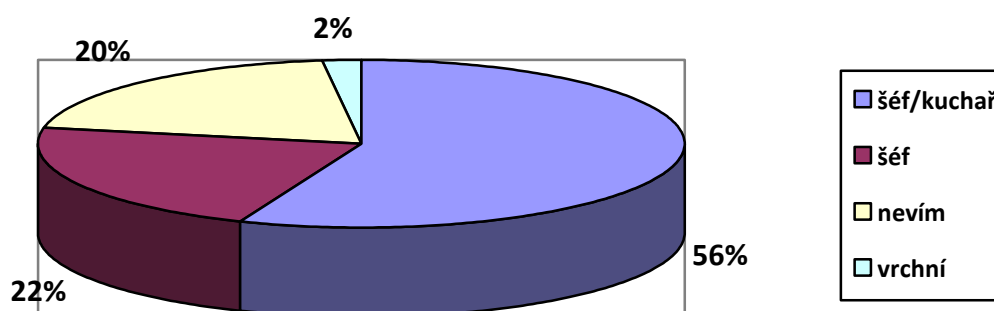
Graph 19: Desk

Front. As shown in Graph 20, 88% of the respondents knew that the Czech equivalent to the word *front* is *předek*. 4% of the answers confused the false friends, and they provided the word *řada* or *fronta* in Czech (*line* or *queue* in English). 8% of them did not know the answer.



Graph 20: Front

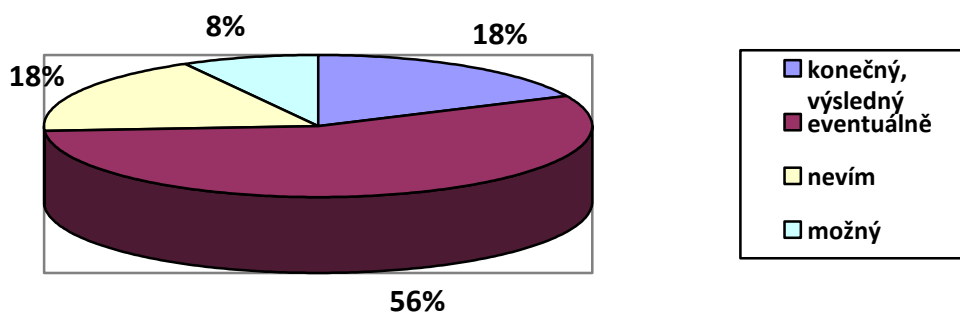
Chef. As figure below shows, 56% of the respondents translated the word *chef* correctly, as *šéfkuchař* or *kuchař* into Czech. 22% of the subjects confused this word with its false friend, and they stated *šéf* as the translation (*boss* in English). 20% of them did not know, and 2% thought that this word means *vrchní* in Czech (*waiter* in English).



Graph 21: Chef

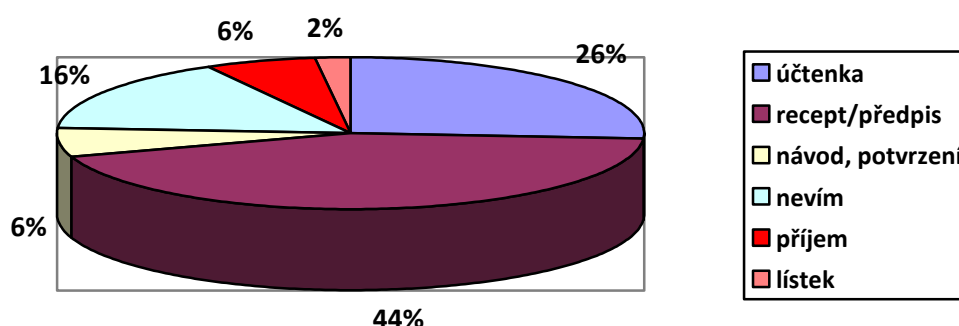
Eventual. We can see in graph below, 56% of the students confused this word with the Czech false friend *eventuálně* (possibly in English). 18% of the students knew correct

meaning which is *konečný* or *výsledný* in Czech. 8% of the subjects thought that it means *možný* (possible), and 18% of them did not know the meaning of the given word.



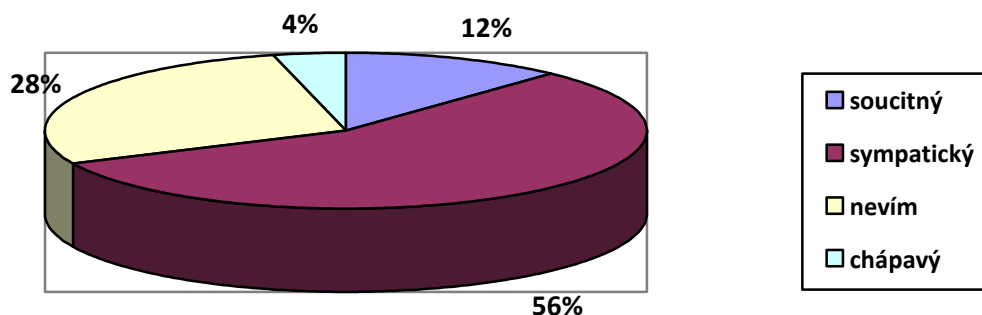
Graph 22: Eventual

Receipt. Graph 23 shows the results of translating the word *receipt*. 44% of the respondents think that *recept* in sense of *předpis* is the Czech equivalent (*prescription* in English) but it is a false friend to this word. 26% of the subjects provided the right translation, *účtenka*. 6% of the respondents wrote *návod* or *potvrzení* (instructions or confirmation), 6% of them wrote *příjem* (which could be another possible translation of this word), and 2% of the students wrote *lístek* (ticket). 16% of them did not write anything or they did not know.



Graph 23: Receipt

Sympathetic. The last word to translate was the word *sympathetic* which means *soucitný* in Czech. As the graph below shows, this translation provided only 12% of the respondents. On the other hand, 56% think that *sympatický* is the meaning in Czech (rather *likeable* in English); in fact it is a false friend. 28% do not know, and 2% wrote *chápavý* as the Czech equivalent what could be also possible right answer.



Graph 24: Sympathetic

Commentaries

As stated in the theoretical chapter, Czech and English are different languages from many points of view, and so there is no wonder that there occurs some kind of language transfer between them. The expectations stated before were confirmed in the research part of the thesis. I must add that some of the respondents did not answer all the questions defined in the questionnaire, especially they skipped the questions regarding to the pronunciation of the words. An interesting point is that only one man answered the questions in English, the rest of the students wrote their answers in Czech.

There was not really evident any connection between the age of the respondents and their lower tendency to language transfer. Not even, education of the students did not show any particular link. The language level of the students could influence language transfer. What I found interesting was that people who considered themselves being B1 or more made basic mistakes similar to students with the lower level. It must be stated that the respondents estimated their language level themselves so it could be a little bit misinterpreted. There is also no obvious link between the length of studying English and the language knowledge; all the students made similar mistakes. As I have already mentioned, a lot of the respondents mentioned that they started to study English several times so they could be marked as false beginners. This phenomenon might show that English is rather difficult for Czech learners, especially because of different language principles. As stated in the theoretical chapter, Czech and English are typologically different languages and even the respondents mentioned that both languages are totally different, even though, they mostly agreed that English is not as complicated as Czech is.

Most of the respondents are influenced by their motivation to learning English. As visible in previous figures, work or travelling opportunities are the biggest motivation for a

lot of the respondents. Further, they want to study abroad, or they admitted that English is necessary these days. Again, I did not find any particular connection between language transfer and the motivation of the students. On the other hand, the respondents who are still students (of secondary school and mostly of the university) had better results than the people who are working, from the language transfer point of view. To some extent, it corresponds with the statement that younger students are not influenced so much by language transfer.

Reading was considered being the easiest skill in English. A lot of the students think that passive skill is not as difficult as the active one; they agreed they have more time to think while reading; they can find out some vocabulary. Regarding speaking, students mostly stated that they are ashamed to speak and that they do not have sufficient vocabulary to speak. Regarding writing, a lot of the respondents mentioned the problem of different spoken and written form of the language. Listening was considered being the most difficult for the students. Mostly they fight with accent and pronunciation of various speakers and they are not able to think in English. This is the feature of language transfer. Skills which regard active participation of the learner or something different from their mother tongue are more problematic.

The respondents were asked to give some reasons for their answers of the difficult features in English. Again, they mostly mentioned things different from the Czech language. They were also asked to state some other things which might be difficult for them, within this category they agreed on tenses and phrasal verbs. They repeated the same problem as mentioned before, it is difficult to estimate the right use of English tense because it is different from Czech. Another repeated statement was the disability to think in English.

There also appeared the response that they put the articles where they have the feeling it is correct. Word order is not understandable to some of them; words have different spoken and written forms. Prepositions do not make any sense for some respondents. Finally, they do not remember English words. From my point of view, the presuppositions that word order, spelling, articles, and prepositions are problematic for Czech learners were mostly confirmed and the respondents stated the most of the problems regarding language transfer.

Both languages are different from a lot of scopes; the respondents mostly confirmed the statements suggested in the theoretical chapter, as for example: phonetics, vocabulary, or syntax. They agreed that these two languages are “different in everything”. One person even mentioned the Indo-European origin of the Czech language. There were mentioned idioms, tenses, word order, and grammar in general; phrasal verbs were mentioned at this point. Some of them found English simpler because of the nonexistence of inflections. On the other hand, some of the respondents claimed that English does not make any sense for them. Further, different spoken and written forms of the words were mentioned. Some even wrote that they are still finding some correspondence with Czech while using English. Generally said, the suggested statements were mostly confirmed.

The respondents admitted that they use Czech while creating English sentences. It is one of the features of language transfer. It could be said that the higher level of the language means the lower usage of Czech in English. As visible in the results, the respondents do not care about the stress so much; they mostly put it on the first syllable of the word which is the Czech pattern. This presupposition was even confirmed in the exercises where they were supposed to mark the stress in the given word. More than the half of the students uses Czech sentence patterns, word order and so on while speaking English.

The pronunciation of the words showed what was expected. The stress was not always marked. If marked, it was very often put on the first syllable of the word which is common in Czech. The word *three* tested the knowledge of pronunciation [□] by the Czech speakers. A lot of the respondents were able to realise that there is not simple [t] pronounced but mostly they were not able to express the sound. In the word *Christmas* the pronunciation of [k] at the beginning of the word instead of Czech [ch] was mainly tested. Mostly this problem was recognized. In the word *hotel*, stress was the most important feature. If the stress was marked, it was approximately 50% correct. Especially the respondents with B2 and higher were able to distinguish this quality. *Bought* seems to be problematic but finally, the respondents knew the right pronunciation with some deviations. *Life* and *hand* were mostly correctly interpreted.

It seemed to be very easy to mark the correct sentence from the given couple. There is possible danger that the students simply made a tip. The third couple of sentences seem to be more problematic than the others. Grammatically, both sentences are correct but the

first one (*I often do my homework at home.*) is considered to be better. This exercise tested mainly the word order, the existence of *There is/There are* in English. Mostly, no obvious influence of language transfer was indicated.

Translation was the most difficult exercise for the students. As the respondents stated before, active skills are more demanding for them. And obviously, this statement was confirmed. Many times they confused the collocation *go home* and they used prepositions like *to* or *at*. This is not surprisingly caused by the influence of language transfer because there is no preposition in Czech. Another problem was the word *late*. Respondents sometimes used the word *later* instead which is often used in Czech but in English it is a word used for comparison. The phrase *I am hungry* was not confused at all. It was surprising that many of the Czechs do not know the expression *dumpling* in English. Further, they incorrectly interpreted the degree *how much*. The position in the sentence was often wrong and they very often avoid or evade this collocation. The next sentence apparently confirmed the confusion of Czechs by the English tenses. This phenomenon does not necessarily have to be caused by language transfer. Possibly there exist some students who do not have enough knowledge of the language to be able to distinguish tenses in English. Many of the respondents simply omitted any indication of the future. Another problem in this sentence arose with the confusion of the word *say* and *tell*. In Czech there exists only one expression for both of these words so the people are not able to see the difference. This is definitely another feature of transfer. The sentence *Give it to that girl* provided some results confirming the problems with preposition and determination in English. Many of the respondents omitted the preposition because there is none in Czech. Even though, there is a demonstrative pronoun in Czech, some respondents avoid it. It is caused by the existence of articles in English while they do not exist in Czech.

The last exercise focused on the false friends in both languages. The word *desk* and *front* seem to be no problem for the most of the respondents. Approximately one half of the respondents know the meaning of the word *chef*; probably they could get in touch with this word quite easily. The rest of the words were mostly confused with their English false friend. The reason is probably that these words sound foreign so the respondents might think that this is a kind of “international word”. Another reason in my opinion is that many of the students simply estimated the meaning without any particular knowledge. It is evident especially within the learners with the lower level of English. Large number of the

respondents refused to answer some of these questions. Again, these were especially people with the lower level of the language. The biggest amount of people did not translate the word *sympathetic*. Students very often confused the words *receipt*, *recipe* and *prescription* which is evident from the results above. All these three expressions have the same possible translation into Czech (*recept*). This partially confirmed the presupposition that the language transfer is more usual with the lower level or knowledge of the language.

Generally said, the findings of the research mostly confirmed the statements made in the theoretical part. Students found English different from Czech and so language transfer was confirmed in most cases. The biggest problem seems to be different vocabulary, word order, and spelling of English words. In some tasks, the influence of language transfer was not really confirmed, for example the existence of *there is/there are* in English and its misunderstanding in Czech. This may be transfer that is more typical to lower-level learners. Translation of Czech sentences into English is very problematic. The respondents found it difficult to think in English and they are not comfortable with listening in English.

In this chapter, the results of the research were introduced. The proportions of results were presented by the figures or by the summary of the responses. Further, the commentaries were presented with the outline of possible language transfer. The following chapter covers the implications for language teaching regarding language transfer.

V. IMPLICATIONS

This chapter deals with possible implications of language transfer for language teaching and outlines some suggestions for language teachers how to deal with this phenomenon. Implications are based on the results of the research. All the conclusions made in this chapter apply to teaching at secondary schools and teaching at language schools as well. Then, it introduces some limitations of the research presented above. Finally, the suggestions for further research are provided.

Implications for Language Teaching

As we can see from the results, Czech adult students are influenced by the language transfer between Czech and English. As indicated in the theoretical part, transfer occurs in every field of language learning (phonology, morphology, syntax, etc.). Teachers should take into account the role of the students' mother tongue in the second language acquisition. There should appear the influence of positive but also of negative transfer. Teachers should try to eliminate the phenomenon of negative transfer and develop the advantages of the positive transfer, on the other hand.

One of the biggest issues within language transfer is the pronunciation or accent of the different speakers. English has many varieties and our mother tongue influences the pronunciation in a huge way. There cannot be said which of the accents is the best or correct but the speaker has to think about the surrounding where he or she is going to use the language. The most important thing here is to be understandable. The teacher should influence the pronunciation of the students but it is not possible to teach all of them to speak in the same way.

Odlin (1989) also presents the problem of process of language learning. Many teachers emphasize the product of learning over the process which is also very important. And the teacher should be familiar with the teaching and learning process to be able to explain the problematic areas and to be understandable. In the field of the learning process the teacher can get in touch with the language transfer, and he or she has to be able to deal with it.

Another problem teachers must deal with is the materials. It is necessary to be able to choose appropriate materials suitable for each student or group of students. Every student needs a different kind of textbooks or materials for his or her study. The most

important aspect still remains the same and it is the effectiveness of learning. Odlin (1989) explains that the teacher should be able to explain the contrast between the first and the second language, to express the difference between particular structures in both languages. Odlin (1989) also mentions the importance of dictionaries in the classroom; it might provide some basic information about the particular word, the pronunciation, or even some additional information about the grammar and usage of the word which could help with the misunderstanding and the wrong usage of the word under the influence of transfer.

Apart from dictionaries and textbooks, teachers have to be familiar with other sources of the language. Teachers have to be well prepared for the lesson; they should be familiar with the contrastive descriptions of the language. Odlin (1989) also adds:

Becoming familiar with the culture as well as the language of their students should be a goal for teachers, just as students usually have to become somewhat familiar with the culture in which the target language is used. Discourse and vocabulary are areas where such familiarity is no doubt necessary, yet hopefully a teacher's curiosity would also extend to any culture for its own sake, to the history, the religion, the arts, the literature, the cuisine, and all other aspects of life in any student's native land. Few language teachers would dispute the need to treat students as individuals, and individual attention is difficult – and at times even impossible – without an understanding of a person's linguistic and cultural background. (p. 163)

Further, the research revealed that students have problems with vocabulary of the language. Teachers should support the learning of new words for example through reading which a lot of the respondents find easy. Next, students found the area of listening difficult so it is necessary to bring more listening into English lessons. Students then should be more aware of the pronunciation and they can also acquire some speaking habits.

Word order is another often mentioned problem. The main reasons are the typological differences between both languages. There is the free word order in Czech and so students very often transfer the Czech sentence patterns into English. Teachers should more concentrate on this issue. The basic principles of English word order should be for example introduced through some sentence patterns or schemes.

There are certain principles that if followed, the negative transfer of L1 can partially be prevented and the positive transfer can be explored. These methodologies of teaching might differ from one class to another; every class is different and needs different attitude. Lightbown and Spada (1993) provide the list of five proposals. Firstly, students should learn correct forms of the words from the very beginning; teachers should correct every mistake and it then prevents students to acquire bad habits in a language. Secondly, they emphasize the interaction in the class; students can make some interaction with the teacher or with other students. Then, they stress listening and reading activities as an important point in learning a language. Teachers are also a key factor in language learning. And finally, teachers should instruct the students while learning, they should be a kind of guide while learning a language.

Other tips for the teacher are according to Lightbown and Spada (1993) for example: teachers should teach simple language structures before complex ones; teachers should use materials that expose students only to language structures which they have already been taught (p. 115).

Teachers should be aware of language transfer; they should take advantages from the positive and try to eliminate the negative transfer. This phenomenon has its place even in teacher education. They should be aware of the problems and be able to work with it.

Limitation of the Research

It is evident that this research has its limitations. There have to be taken into account some features covered in this research. The respondents are taken only from one language school so they are not really representatives of the whole Czechs; the amount of the respondents is very limited. As mentioned above, some of the answers might be considered rather guesses than true objective answers (language level, decision between two given sentences, translation of the false friends). Definitely, there cannot be covered all the features of the language transfer between English and Czech; only some of them were chosen. Some of the answers of the respondents are rather their own opinions than verified facts. The pronunciation of the given words could be also arguable. It is obvious that a lot of the respondents are not aware of the phonetics signs and so the results may reflect this fact.

Concerning the results, it is not possible to cover all the features which might be influenced by language transfer. It is very probable that I omitted some answers which are connected with language transfer. Sometimes the results are influenced by the fact that the respondents did not answer the entire question given. For example, they very often omitted to mark the stress of the words, or they skipped some of the questions. We can only guess what the reason was. Probably they did not know the right answer or they were not sure about the answer so they simply did not answer at all. This might also have some influence on the results of some particular categories.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research could be done among a wider range of English learners; it would be suitable to involve more people and also the pupils of the lower age to compare the results. Also it could help to broaden the questionnaire and focus more on the practical knowledge of the learners. Listening or vocabulary testing might be included; vocabulary does not have to focus only on false friends. Also the interview as the means of investigation might provide interesting results; both in the area of pronunciation and in the investigation of the conscious use of English; if the students are able to react in English or if they are using Czech while speaking. It is possible to prove their language awareness. Another kind of research could be done also among the teachers. They could be asked in what sense (if any) they try to eliminate the negative transfer and if they support the positive one. Another point could be the use of the materials; in what sense they deal with this phenomenon. Both teachers and materials could be involved into further researches. Last thing which could be done at this point is class observation. The observer could monitor the occurrence of language transfer during English lessons.

In this chapter, some implications for language teaching are provided. Teachers should mainly eliminate negative transfer and support positive transfer while learning the language. The implications are based on the results of the research and on the theoretical background chapter as well. Further, it deals with the limitations of the research which occurred during the investigation. Finally, it suggests some other possible ideas for further research regarding language transfer.

VI. CONCLUSION

As stated in theoretical background chapter, language transfer has a lot of types and there exist a lot of factors which might influence it. The most important types of language transfer for this thesis are definitely positive and negative transfer. The personality of the learner also has its place in the appearance of transfer. The students are highly influenced by their motivation for learning English.

An interesting fact is that secondary school influences further learning and acquisition of English as a second language. Based on the research, adult learners adopted some habits during their studies at secondary school and it is very difficult for them to get rid of these habits.

Both languages are not really similar but students still transfer some habits from their mother tongue into L2. In the case of Czech and English, they are not able to get used to different vocabulary and word order of the sentence. The thesis also confirmed that students find it difficult to listen in English and it goes together with the differences in spelling; the written and spoken form of the word is different. Students have also problems with pronunciation; English provides sounds which are not common in Czech. The influence of language transfer was highly evident in the appearance of false friends in both languages. It was confirmed that students are not really aware of the existence of this phenomenon.

Teachers should deal with language transfer and they should be able to benefit from advantages of positive transfer and they should prevent negative transfer. They should know how to present new vocabulary and grammar. Sometimes the differences between both languages might be helpful while acquiring completely new language while the similarities might be rather confusing.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire in Czech

Dotazník: Angličtina jako druhý jazyk

Pohlaví: muž žena

Věk:

Nejvyšší dosažené vzdělání:.....

Zaměstnání:

Jak dlouho se učíte anglicky?

Uved'te Vaši jazykovou úroveň:

A1 (pokročilý začátečník)

A2 (mírně pokročilý)

B1 (středně pokročilý)

B2 (vyšší)

C1 (pokročilý)

C2 (jazykově způsobilý)

Jak často se učíte anglicky?

Každý den několikrát týdně málokdy před písemkou vůbec

Proč se učíte anglicky?

.....
.....
.....

Učíte se/používáte Aj i mimo školu? (pokud ano – kde a jak)

.....
.....
.....

Seřad'te dovednosti od nejlehčí (1) po nejtěžší (4). Zdůvodněte:

Mluvení ____ psaní ____ čtení ____ poslech ____

.....
.....

Co Vám činí potíže (i více možností)? Zdůvodněte:

- Slovosled:.....
- Pravopis:.....
- Výslovnost:
- Slovní zásoba:
- Členy:
- Předložky:.....

- Jiný problém:
-

Co je pro Vás z výše uvedených možností nejobtížnější?

V čem je podle Vás angličtina jiná než čeština?

.....

.....

.....

Vyznačte jednu z možností:

Pomáhám si češtinou při tvorbě anglických vět.

Vždy **často** **někdy** **nikdy**

Při mluvení si dávám pozor na přízvuk v anglické větě.

Vždy **často** **někdy** **nikdy**

Při mluvení se snažím přemýšlet v angličtině.

Vždy **často** **někdy** **nikdy**

Napište, jak byste vyslovili následující slova, vyznačte přízvuk:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| hree | Bought |
| Christmas | Life |
| Hotel | Hand |

Ze zadaných dvojic vět vyznačte tu, kterou byste použili:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. The book gave me my friend. | 2. My friend gave me the book. |
| 1. There is a pen on the table. | 2. On the table is a pen. |
| 1. I often do my homework at home. | 2. Often I do my homework at home. |
| 1. She reads quickly. | 2. She quickly reads. |
| 1. He goes every day to school. | 2. He goes to school every day. |

Přeložte:

Často chodím pozdě domů.

Mám hlad.

Mám moc rád knedlíky.

Řeknu ti příběh.

Dej to té dívce.

Přeložte slovíčka do češtiny:

actual

desk

front

chef

eventual

receipt

sympathetic

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in English
Questionnaire: English as a second language

Gender: male female

Age:

Highest achieved Education:

Occupation:

How long have you been learning English?

Specify your language level:

A1 (beginner)

A2 (elementary)

B1 (intermediate)

B2 (upper intermediate)

C1 (advanced)

C2 (proficiency)

How often do you learn English?

Every day several times a week sometimes before a test never

Why are you learning English?

.....
.....

Do you learn/use English out of school? (if yes – where and how)

.....
.....

Order the following skills from the easiest one (1) to the most difficult (4). Give reasons:

Speaking ____ writing ____ reading ____ listening ____

.....
.....

What causes you difficulties (more options possible)? Give reasons:

- Word order:
 - Spelling:
 - Pronunciation:
 - Vocabulary:
 - Articles:
 - Prepositions:
 - Others:
-

What is the most difficult language area from the list above?

In what way is English different from Czech?

.....

.....

.....

Mark out one option:

I use Czech while creating English sentences.

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Always | often | sometimes | never |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|

I am careful about English stress while speaking.

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Always | often | sometimes | never |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|

I am trying to think in English while speaking.

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Always | often | sometimes | never |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|

How would you pronounce the following words? Write and mark the stress:

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Three | Bought |
|-------------|--------------|

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Christmas | Life |
|-----------------|------------|

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| Hotel | Hand |
|-------------|------------|

Out of the two given sentences, mark which one would you use:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2. The book gave me my friend. | 2. My friend gave me the book. |
| 2. There is a pen on the table. | 2. On the table is a pen. |
| 2. I often do my homework at home. | 2. Often I do my homework at home. |
| 2. She reads quickly. | 2. She quickly reads. |
| 2. He goes every day to school. | 2. He goes to school every day. |

Translate into English:

Často chodím pozdě domů.

Mám hlad.

Mám moc rád knedlíky.

Řeknu ti příběh.

Dej to té dívce.

Translate the words into Czech:

actual

desk

front

chef

eventual

receipt

sympathetic

SUMMARY IN CZECH

Diplomová práce se zabývá jazykovým transferem mezi mateřským jazykem (češtinou) a druhým jazykem (angličtinou). Teoretická část nejprve popisuje různé typy jazykového transferu, poté se zabývá jazykovou typologií obou jazyků. Následně zmiňuje různé faktory, které mohou ovlivnit jazykový transfer. Na faktory je nahlíženo převážně z hlediska osobnosti studenta. Následně se soustředí na jazykový transfer vztažený k lingvistice obou jazyků. Praktická část byla provedena formou dotazníku. Bylo dotazováno padesát dospělých studentů plzeňské jazykové školy. Otázky byly formulovány tak, aby testovaly jazykový transfer a i výsledky jsou prezentovány ve vztahu k němu. Na závěr jsou rozebrány nejčastější chyby studentů v zadaném dotazníku a výsledky jsou vztaženy k výuce anglického jazyka.